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Where Duty Leads

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WHERE DUTY LEADS

Dedicated to General Sir Sam Hughes

His spirit of enthusiasm and grim determination to rise above all obstacles, and to emerge from this terrible travail of nations triumphantly victorious, has been in the main my inspiration. Our ambition is but to carry on his work, and to emulate him, for the glory of the Empire and our beloved Canada.

Where Duty Leads

By

Capt. H. B. MacConnell

WILLIAM BRIGGS
Toronto
1 9 1 6

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PREFACE

I HAVE been asked by my friends to write a short preface to this, my first published work. I do not like prefaces. They are superfluous usually and savor of excuses. Perhaps my friends were in the wrong in asking me to write this; perhaps not.

They who have read these poems while in manuscript have criticized. They who were kind in their criticisms I wish to thank for the encouragement they gave. They who were unkind but conscientious I also wish to thank for the determination they aroused in me to prove that lyric beauty, in metre, rhythm and rhyme, was not essential to poetic beauty. Truth is: All the words in the English language, except a few, are beautiful, if used in the correct place. All are ugly if misplaced. I have made no attempt at lyric beauty.

014

PREFACE

There is no beauty in the flight of the refugees from Belgium, but there is grandeur, pathos, tragedy, sublimity and that eternal call of the weak to the strong, that never is denied, in the Anglo-Saxon race. Only the beauty of a spirit unconquerable is necessary to make poetry

> "Rich with the fragrance of courage,
> Pure with the fragrance of truth."

I have only presented things as I see them. I do not ask to be forgiven if I have transgressed the laws of literature in the telling. My heart knows not the laws which would fetter and strangle its honest utterance, but only that it is full, and this is the vehicle I have used to convey to kindred souls the love of honor, freedom, home, king and country, that fills it.

H. B. M.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
A Prayer	11
Canada	13
England	18
Ireland	21
Scotland	27
France	29
Russia	33
Belgium	38
Kitchener	48
The Day—"Der Tag"	50
The Sword	52
Medically Unfit	55
Courage (At Home)	56
Sonate	58
Our American Cousin	59
Germany	63
The Empire	71

A PRAYER

Oh God, to Thee, in this our hour of need,
With contrite, bowed and humble hearts, we turn.
Pour down upon us, with Thy gracious love,
The healing balm of Thy tender mercy.
Bring to our eye the sympathetic tear,
To soothe those hearts, with bitter anguish torn.
Teach us to live in Thee, that we may purge
From out our hearts the bitterness and hate
That floods, consumes, and burns our very souls,
And calls to be revenged upon our foes.
Make us to lean, for strength and life and hope
Upon the cross of Christ. Thine only Son,
(Given to us, as we give now to Thee,
Our faith, our life, our all), teach us to know,
And in His Spirit clothe our souls and life.
We, in our futile, puny strength, must fail
Without Thy guiding hand to show the way,
And give us light to fight unto the end;

But with that faith in Thee, with which we pray
For victory, not only o'er our foes
But over all our human weaknesses,
We know that we shall rise again supreme
From out our bitter woes, strengthened, chastened,
And comforted, in spirit and in heart,
To live each day, as Thou would'st have us live,
In one enfolding bond of brotherhood
With all the world.
Oh God, this our prayer to Thee to-day.

HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS
THE DUKE OF CONNAUGHT

CANADA

WHEN God made Heaven and Sea and Earth,
And moulded hill and plain,
He made a land both great and fair,
And fashioned it with wondrous care.
He locked its North with Arctic ice,
To temper summer heat;
With major lakes, and rivers deep,
He closed its Southern gate;
And then, across its mighty West,
He threw a fertile plain,
And set a range of mighty peaks
To guard its Western gate.
One gate alone he open threw,
To greet the new-born day:
The Eastern gate he open left,
Of this fair land, "Our Canada."

Then, after countless centuries
Were spent and passed away,

A race of men, both strong and true,
Set forth upon the ocean blue;
And Westward, from the East, they sailed
And found this land, so fair.
They entered by the Eastern gate,
Which God had left for them,
And closed it not, when they had passed,
But Westward forged their way;
And there they raised their country's crest,
The lily flower of France;
And reckoned not that this fair land
Could grim and hostile be;
Nor that a hardier race of men
Would find in it their heritage.

Then Westward, from the East, again
Came men of other blood,
To question not, of claims or rights,
To challenge not, nor yet to fight—
Unless the cause were just and fair—
The dwellers in this land;
But just to live as brothers live,
And share as brothers share.
But France's blood was hot to flow,
And Britain's hot with scorn,
And France unsheathed her battle sword

And Britain's guns belched death and fire;
The sons of France fought gallantly;
With Britain's sons 'twas die and dare;
Then France's emblem bit the dust,
And Britain took the lion's share.

Then Britain closed the Eastern gate
That France left open wide,
And gave it to her conquered foe
To keep, and watch and guard;
And built them forts, and sent them ships,
To keep the entrance clear;
And left them there, by honor bound,
But Britain kept the key;
And then unto the other gates
She flew, and kept them fast,
Lest other men of other blood
Should envy her her colony;
But since that day no alien race
Has dared to try to pass those gates.
The others, they who tried, they failed
To take their brother's heritage.

Sons of this land, virile and strong,
What blood flows in your veins?

Is it the blood of a conquered race,
Or is it your father's blood again,
That needed but the pibroch's skirl,
Or the prick of an English rose,
Or a tiny green sprig of shamrock,
To make it hot, with the battle fire?
Or must this land of your birthright,
This land of your heritage,
Tremble in shame, for the honor
That's bred in her Northern snows,
The strength of her Western manhood,
The pride of her Eastern men:
Must the flag, the name your fathers made,
And their blood, be challenged in vain?

No. Where once the blood of old Britain
Has hallowed the soil we love,
And Ireland's blood has once been shed,
There it will always rule;
But the sons of this land—
This breed of the North—
Who basked in the time of peace,
Who pale, and shrink, when the breath of war
Is breathed across the sea
Are inbred sons of mongrel sires;
And the sons of this land—

This breed of the North—
Who heeded well the call to arms,
Shall come again from the fields of death,
And cast them out, these mongrel curs,
Lest they poison and blight our noble blood.

To-day the song of a nation
Swells from East to West;
'Tis the battle song of a deathless race,
Set to the cannon's thunder;
In honor we live, in honor we'll die,
For right, for our God, and for love;
We'll fight to the end, be it life, be it death,
And we'll die with lips that are smiling;
For, when God made Heaven, sea and earth,
And moulded hill and plain,
He made a land both great and fair,
And fashioned it with wondrous care;
And this, to us, our heritage,
Our birthright has been given;
"God bless this land—our Canada,"
And "God save our King."

ENGLAND

England! Thy name is breathed in reverence,
Whene'er a homeless wanderer turns to thee;
Thy shores are refuge places for fugitives
And outcasts of the earth, the overspill
Of all the human depots of the earth.
Oh, mighty, tiny nation; half an island;
Seagirt on all but one bloodbound frontier,
Thy splendid isolation spells thy freedom,
And in the teeming millions of thy people
Flows not a single drop of vassal blood;
For he who in his birth-land was vassal, serf or slave,
Or exiled for religion, for politics or creed,
Becomes a prince, a noble, a freed man,
By the blood that brooked not tyranny,
When once he breathes thy name in reverence: Home.

They call thee faithless Albion over there,
And serenade thee with their song of hate.

KING GEORGE V.

Their accursed spies, with their very presence
Contaminate thy shores, pollute thy atmosphere,
And stifle life and evil poison bring.
They breathed Hell's breath, to sear, and blight, and burn thee;
They breathed Hell's hate and jealousy and fear.
They called thee brother, and they plannéd murder;
They called thee friend—the assassin's subterfuge—
And stabbed thee in the back, a coward's blow.
And yet thou did'st not fear, nor even hate them;
Thou did'st not tremble 'neath the blow they gave,
But sprang to arms, one mind, one thought, one feeling.
Ten thousand lusty-throated cannon roar
Defiance at their war of frightfulness.

And this, the secret of thy greatness, England:
Thou leavest to every man what is his own;
Thou dost not take but what is earned or owed thee.
Thou sayest not, "I own thee, vassal; serve me";
Though thou demandest not, still all is thine.

Thou hast aye stood for peace, where peace was
virtue;
Thou hast aye stood, when virtue stood for war.
A thousand years—thy history tells the story;
A thousand years of freedom and of glory.
Where flies thy flag, abides a righted wrong.
They call thee faithless Albion over there;
Aye, faithless to their creed of lust and blood,
But faithful to a nation's plighted honor,
And faithful to a plighted brotherhood;
The brotherhood of man that stands for God.

IRELAND

IRELAND! When I think of you,
I think of sorrow, sighs and tears,
Of sunny smiles and laughing eyes,
Of emerald green and azure skies,
Of broken hearts, and blood and fire,
Of longings carried to the grave,
Of broken homes and broken hopes,
Of passion, love, and cold and want.

Oh, quick to love and quick to hate,
Impulsive heart that in you beats,
Quick to forgive and love again;
Could but your mind control your heart,
There's nought to you too high to reach,
There is no height you could not scale,
There is no power you could not wield,
Your artiste soul would purchase all.

IRELAND

What fate decreed that you should be
Destined to sup the cup of woe?
For you, wherein all things are fair,
Were made for Heaven's anteroom.
The fairest flowers, the softest skies,
The sweetest air, your emerald green,
Were all bestowed for peace and love,
The Presence of Divinity.

But though the stage was set by God,
And lighted with Infinite light,
And though the fairest scenes were made
And painted by Immortal hands,
Some demon, of satanic mien,
Ascended from Hadestic realms,
To curse the fairest land of earth,
And poison it with hellish breath.

But ah, the wonder of it all,
Your soul bowed down, is buoyant still;
For you have sung earth's sweetest songs,
And sobbed divinest melodies.
The throbbing chords of broken hearts
But sweeter seem to saddened souls;
The dying songs of shattered hopes,
The dirge of entombed liberty.

IRELAND

When cynics sneered and traitors harped
That you would yet disloyal be,
We cast the gauntlet in their face,
And choked them, with their dastard lie.
'Twas such as they who brought to you,
In treason's lie, on falsehood's tongue,
The bitterness of freedom lost,
The fallacy of slavery's chains.

'Twas such as they that roused to wrath
The spirit of your kingly race,
That could not bow to irksome task,
That could not bend indignant knee.
They hid the truth and gave you lies,
They fed you with the noisome fruit
That ripens and, like pestilence,
Destroys the soul, that tastes thereof.

Ireland, it was not that we
(Whom you have called oppressor, vile)
Had willed to desolate your land
And sink you in your depth of woe;
But you have never understood
That we, to you, in freedom's cause,
Have held, in all the darkened past,
The hand of strength, in friendship's name.

Our hearts have bled when you denied,
And called that hand a Judas hand.
Our tears have flowed, for off'rings spurned,
And cast away, despised and scorned.
Our lips have prayed unto that God
Whom you call yours and we call ours,
To lead, that we might understand
The way, to knit our souls in love.

In times when we were sore oppressed,
And other nations sought our fall,
You stood with us in loyalty,
And shed your blood in common cause.
You gave to us great generals
To lead us on to victory.
You gave to us that we might live,
Your spirit, courage, and your all.

Ireland, we have always known
That you to force could not submit;
Your pride of spirit and your blood
Arose indignant at the thought.
But you, in heated mind, forgot
That our blood was proud as yours.
Would you expect us to submit,
And bow before a challenge hot?

And so, through years of tragedy,
Our tears and blood have mingled close;
And they have been but shed in vain,
And all our sorrow been for nought;
For you have thought that we have willed
To match our strength against your own;
And we thought you a wilful child,
That would not brook sincere advice.

Oh, sweet, sad land of song and tears,
Where passion's fire and love supreme,
And bitter hate controls the heart,
That vibrant throbs, with virile life;
Put not your life against our strength;
Throw not the bloody challenge down;
Seek not revenge against your own;
Put not upon our hands your blood.

For we have prayed that you might see
The light that shines (the glorious goal
That lies before and beckons on
With freedom's promise) from the dark.
And we will stand with you for right,
Through all the winding ways of wrong;
And we will be your staunchest friend
If you will but our friendship own.

Forget the past, as we forget;
Look on before, your future set.
All that you ask we'll gladly give;
All that you give we'll gladly take;
For then we'll know that you have grown
In wisdom's strength, yourself to rule;
And blood, that once was shed in vain,
Was shed to give to you your soul.

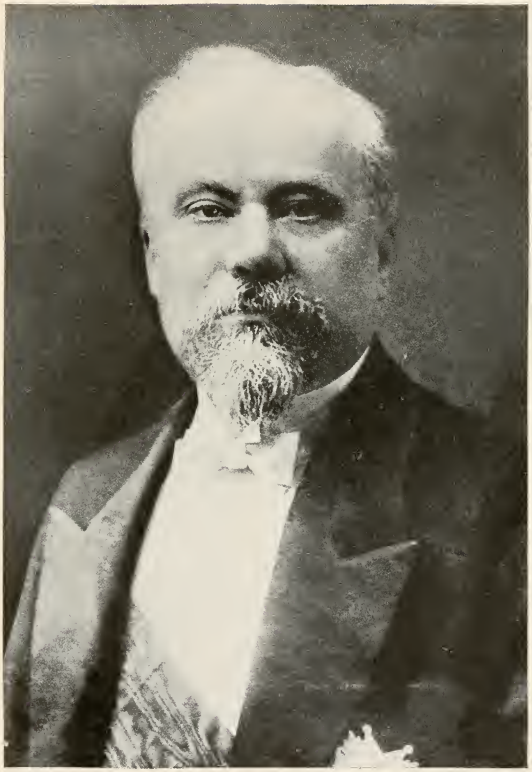
SCOTLAND

Oh, dour land of purple heather,
Of bonnie lads and lassies fair;
Thy hills and mountains, lakes and lowlands
Hold thy history. Great and noble,
Clan and clan, now locked together,
For a nation's weal or woe,
Once were scattered feudal foemen,
Bitter, fierce, unyielding, vengeful;
Trained to avenge their tribal wrongs.

These, reared in the lap of hunger,
Nurtured on the breast of want,
Fostered on thy barren hillsides,
Beaten by thy wintry storms,
Needed one strong hand to lead them,
One great mind to fit the pieces;
One strong arm to weld together
Clan by clan, to form a nation
Strong and virtuous and unconquered.

And to thee were sent thy leaders:
Kingly, noble Robert Bruce,
And thy mighty William Wallace.
Their's the minds that set the pattern
For their followers to weave;
Their's the hands that forged the segments
Of thy mighty coat of mail;
Their's the arms that held together
Pieces broken in thy making.

Oh, dour land of purple heather,
All that's strong and true art thou;
Firm in friendship, soft and yielding,
Stern to death in time of woe;
Fierce in passion, fierce in battle,
On to death, but ne'er retreating;
But one goal, the goal of honor;
But one name, and that forever—
Scotland, land of purple heather.



PRESIDENT POINCARE

FRANCE

Brave France, who calls your sons degenerate?
Who calls your daughters fallen, helpless fair?
All the world to you is on bended knee,
Bowed in homage, tribute to your valor.
The fathers of your sons remember still
The tramp of Prussian feet upon your soil;
The mothers of your daughters still recall
The soul polluted by the Prussian touch.
Had they to live and wait a thousand years
For this, the payment of the debt in full,
Each year would add but to the interest,
Nor lessen by one hated life the cost.
For they were moulded in a form that lives
Immortal, by the blood that flows in Gaul.

Is it to wonder, then, that you, their flesh,
The sons and daughters of that patriot race,

Should fling yourselves within the bloody breach
And with your bodies build it up anew?
Ah, it were better, better still by far,
That every heart that owns the Gallic blood
Should lie forever stilled within the breach
Than kneel in shame beneath the Prussian sword.

We can but feel the thrill of sympathy,
That throbs within our hearts, as throbbed your
own,
When startled drumbeats trembled through your
land,
And called, "To arms, ye brave, ye sons of France,
Your wives, your children, sweethearts, all ye
love,
Will be the sacrifice, if now ye fail."
And then the answer from your hearts you gave;
It rang across the world, a clarion cry:
"Dear France, fair France, will on to victory,
Or in the front of battle she will die.
The blood that came from out our father's veins
Still lives in France, it's fire as of old;
And it shall be, in life and death, as pure,
Unsullied as the best that e'er has flowed.

Yes, we have lived and waited for this day,
The day of vengeance for a nation's wrongs;
And now our hearts are strengthened, and we know
That every hated Prussian in our land
Shall pay in full, and tenfold shall they pay,
Who ground us 'neath the heel of tyranny.
Can we forget what we were taught to know?
Can we our mother's sacred milk disown?
It is the creed that we have fed upon,
The law of vengeance for our fathers wronged.
And now the time has come, we one and all
Are ready, ready, yes, to do and die:
Where France's banner leads, we follow on.
Where France's honor bids, there we will come.
Where France's danger is, we stand and die.
Where France's grave is, there, yes there, we'll lie."

Yes, brothers o'er the channel, we have heard
The answer that you gave to all the world;
The answer to the Prussian at your door;
And we have come to aid you in the fight
To set your nation's rights above its wrongs.

Each British heart beats firm and strong and true,
And many will lie stilled before the end;
But, France, we'll stand beside you or we'll fall,
Hands clasped, hearts locked, our faces to the foe.
Yes, we have sworn to aid you in your need,
And we will keep our promise faithfully.
A scrap of paper was the bond that held
Our given word, our honor and our creed;
And Britain's promise, made in faith, shall hold
Until the world is freed from Prussian blood—
The blood that would despoil all we have made
And hoped for, lived and died to call our own.
Yes, brothers o'er the channel, we have heard,
And Britain's breast is bared to take the sword;
And Britain's arm is raised to take the blow;
And Britain's heart is yours, and Britain's blood
Shall mingle with your own in freedom's cause,
Till right is raised o'er might, on freedom's throne,
And all the world is ruled by peace and love.

CZAR NICHOLAS

RUSSIA

Russia, thy very name spells mystery and awe;
Thou'rt like the unread pages of a book
Whose title pictures romance, love and pain;
And thou'rt like some pond'rous, learnéd tome,
Whose secrets only savant minds may know,
And even they may only guess the truth,
And blindly grope and search the hidden way;
For in the hidden pages of thy life,
That turn, as turn the ages, slowly by,
Thy future lies enlocked to mortal eye,
And none may know what time will yet reveal.
Thy destiny is planned, but not by mortal hand.

Kings have dreamed of empires, and have died,
And with them died the kingdoms of their dreams.
Nations, from out the travail of their birth,
Have risen to the zenith height of power,
And then have waned and dimmed and sunk and died;

Whole races have been swept from human ken
And lost forever in oblivion;
But thou stand'st as the granite rock of earth,
Unchanging as the centuries pass by.
Kings are but puppets when they brook thy tide,
That flows resistless as the ocean's own.
The nations that stand against thee perish
Within the flood that sweeps resistless on;
Perish as nations, but, absorbed in thee,
Live on, to swell thy super empire's flood.
If thou but knewest thy mighty giant power,
And if thou could'st that mighty power wield,
The chains that bind thy fettered soul would burst;
Thou would'st triumphant stand before the world.
But now, as in the past, thou lie'st in wait
Until the door shall open, and the light
Shall fill thy darkened soul with knowledge full;
Then when thou see'st the way before thee clear,
And conquest's vision fills thy wakened mind,
Up from thy bed of ages thou shalt rise
And smite to death the foes that bar thy way.
Empires that now derisive 'fore thee stand,
Shall crumple, like a fallen house of cards.
Days will not mark the 'wakening from thy sleep,
But years of blood will show thy passing way.

Thou'rt slow to move, but once the wheels have
turned,
A generation passes ere they stop.

Then, when the lust of conquest in your heart
Is purged and chastened by the fire of love
(As floodtide waters, when their force is spent,
Return to find their level once again),
Thou shalt return to peace and industry,
And all thy land shall breathe prosperity.
Millions of souls that knew not freedom's name
Shall rise to bless the land that gave them birth;
And far and wide throughout thy vast domain
The spirit that awakes in freedom's cause
Shall fill thy land, and make thee supermen.
Out of the dark, in all the sciences,
Into the light, with music and with art,
Unto the world, with all thy treasure store
Of new-found virtues, gift to bless mankind;
A super empire, with a super mind,
The flashing genius of the virile North.

Russia, this is thy noble destiny,
Foretold by sages of prophetic fire,
Who looked within the future but too well,
And saw therein the smould'ring spark of pow'r,

That, like a comet in the Eastern sky,
Would flash across earth's zenith in its flight,
And leave its course bestrewn with fallen stars
That still would shine, but with a lesser light,
And be as satellites to the greater sun.

But this one word, for they who stand within
Thy far-flung orbit and its flaming course:
Let not thy triumph, giv'n to thee by God,
Forget the fate that ever will befall
The empire that has scorned the Infinite.
Let live the weak, as God has let thee live,
When human weakness would have pulled thee down.
Just as thy mercy to a fallen foe,
So shall thy strength of heart be thy reward.
The weak will need thy strength to lean upon,
And leaning, shall absorb, but weaken not
The heart that nurtures with its virgin blood;
For they, the weak, shall turn to thee, and bless
The hand that smote, but raised the fallen foe,
And stood him back upon his feet again,
And gave him strength and life and health and love.

Russia, should we, thy Anglo-Saxon friend,
Within the range of thy ambitions lie,

With all thy strength recall the flaming sword;
Let not the pride of empire 'twixt us stand;
Let not our pride of race and creed and blood
Blind to our eyes our common brotherhood;
But let us stand forever friend to friend,
The guardians of frail humanity,
Protectors of the weak, and strong to save,
And lift and cure and heal the fallen ones.
Then all the world shall hearken, see, and learn,
And turn to us our creed and faith to know.
This is the end that God has planned for us,
To have the honor of millenium;
And when upon the world that spirit sleeps,
Our work will finished be, and we may rest
Secure, to know that we in ages past
Have shed our best blood well, and not in vain,
For mankind will be saved from human pain,
And heartache, sorrow, anguish, shall no more
Engulf our brothers of the human mould,
And all creation will to us reveal
The love of man to man, and man for God.

BELGIUM

I.

"Let us make to this land a shrine."

HERE, upon this hallowed ground, sacred and glorified
By the sweet blood of innocents, martyred and sacrificed;
Here, to the memory of things that were,
And the promise of things that will be,
Let us make to this land a shrine, sublime
With a steadfast resolve unchangeable.
Here is the graveyard of nations.
Here will nations come to mourn.
Here will the eyes that no longer can weep,
Being dry with a surfeit of weeping;
And here will the lips that dare not speak,
Lest the words they speak be sacrilege;
And here will the hearts that no more can break,
Being broken and dead, with black despair,
Come, and bow at the healing shrine.

KING ALBERT

Then will the eyes that could not weep
Be dim, with tears of grief assuaged;
Then will the lips that dared not speak,
Move to the form of silent prayer;
Then will the hearts that are broken and dead
Quicken again, with hope renewed,
At this shrine we build with faith and love,
Shrine in our hearts, a brotherhood.

II.

"The works of man shall pass away,
But the spirit of God remains."

Where are thy bound'ries, once sacred to all?
And where are thy cities, rich with thy toil?
Are they vanished, like ghosts in the morning,
Gone like the dew or the nightingale's call?
Is this, that remains, scattered and broken,
Only the remnants, the thread of thy soul,
To lie in the dust, a poor, broken flow'r,
That lived to brighten the spot where it grew?
No. For the heel that ruthlessly crushed thee
Shall pass, and be gone no more to return;
And the bruise that it left, shall, like the flow'rs,
Be fragrant in death, on the broken stem.

Rich with the fragrance of courage, that steeled thee
To stand, when to stand meant the giving of all;
Pure with the fragrance of truth that upheld thee,
And kept thee thy honor, and saved thee thy soul.
Gone are thy works and the cities thou builded,
And gone are thy people and all that they loved,
Nothing remains but blackness of tragedy,
Silent and awful, and as cold as the grave.
Nothing remains? Yes, still there is something
That lives, and shall live to the end of all time
Deathless and sweet as a rose in the morning,
As pure and untarnished as virgin gold,
Rarer than treasures that mortals hold rarest,
Better than life, if we live we but die.
Still there is left thee thy spirit sublime,
Spirit of angels, of God and Heaven,
Spirit to keep thee forever a nation,
While there lives one with thy spirit imbued.

III.

Sanctuary.

All across thy plains,
Under the stars at night,

Under the brighter noon,
In the sodden rain,
Humble wooden crosses,
Made by tired hands,
Stand, silent sentinels,
Marking lonely graves.
Pitiful, pitiful,
This the end of life.
There they sleep in peace,
Tired, broken, torn;
No more nights of horror,
No more days of strife,
Just a sleep forever,
Rest, oh blessed rest.
Humble wooden crosses,
Made by loving hands,
Stand, silent sentinels,
Guarding lonely graves.

IV.

Retrospection.

Calm and peaceful as some inland lake,
Secure in the shadow of the hills
That rear their wooded heights
To shield it from the winds of the world,
You lay in your beauty.

No shadow passed across your peaceful breast,
Save that of passing cloud or bird on wing.
The shadow of the mighty god of war
That stalked beside you seemed
As but a mirrored shadow in a lake,
That darkens not its depths, but still is there.
Secure and trusting as a little child
That sleeps beneath its mother's watching eye,
Unknowing that the world waits but the time
To lay the weight of sorrow we call life
Upon its heart,
You lay and dreamed
Of wealth, content and everlasting peace.
You dreamed of fields well tilled, and gardens
full,
And seed returned in harvest many fold.
You dreamed of soft winds wafted from the sea,
And gentle rains to soften summer heat.
You dreamed of happy youth and age well spent,
In humble cot and mansion, side by side.
You dreamed of nations, great and strong and
true
To keep inviolate a plighted trust.
But, ere you waked, your dream was changed and
broken,
A very nightmare of horrific things.

Your wealth was turned to rags and bodies
stricken,
Content and peace were ravaged from your arms.
Your fields and gardens full were turned to
ashes,
Your harvest swept away by blasting fire.
Your sea winds changed to storms of poison
gases,
Your gentle rain to hail of shot and shell.
Your youth and age lay dead beside their hearth-
stone,
Your cot and mansion, blackened ruins, fell.
The nation that you trusted towered o'er you
In passion, lust, a fury incarnate,
A demon from the fiery depths of hell,
A fiend of blood, a vampire of the night.

V.

The Refugees.

They came as come the fallen leaves
Before autumn winds;
Blindly, madly, rushing and resting,
Their flight uncontrolled,
Swayed and distorted,
A maudlin jest, the wild wind's fancy.

Some fell and rested in quiet nooks,
And hidden lay till the wild wind passed;
But many rushed on and on, and away,
Whirled hither and yon by the roaring blast.
They came:
Each road a surging line, multicoloured red,
Many hued, in wild array, some talking,
Some laughing, some sobbing, many weeping;
Others with set lips, stricken dumb with pain,
And sad eyes, hard, staring and unseeing.
Infants in arms, frail, helpless and wailing,
Nursed on drying breasts, that love could not fill,
Their little bodies, racked in hunger's pain;
Mothers, ready to die, that they might live.
Little children, clinging to a mother,
Or lost, and sobbing, wild eyed, filled with terror,
Toddling on and on, it seemed forever;
Tired, tired little bodies, broken hearts.
Young girls there were of tender years,
The first sweet bud of womanhood
Bursting to bloom within their hearts,
And that sweet tinge of ecstasy,
Tinging the world a rosy hue,
Ready to burst to flames; but now
Their faces white and agonized,
For they have seen and known the beast
That lies unmasked in primal man.

Young wives, fleeing from a nameless horror,
Faces pale with sorrow, grey with terror,
Hearts and bodies torn with pain and anguish,
Racking birthpains thrust too soon upon them.
Men and women old, dried and shrunken,
Faces lined with age, dull and stupid,
Old eyes dim with years, pale, pathetic,
Toothless gums and mumbling, babbling tongues.
On and on they came, an endless stream,
Misery's climax, mounted on a throne
Of human hate; essence of revenge;
Hate is fear, and no revenge is sweet.

VI.

Vision.

I stand, it were, as if 'twixt Heaven and earth
suspended;
And over you, a fairy spell, as woven in a dream,
Whose dainty arabesques, with lightness ethereal
Are garlanded and hung and folded to caress
you;
A fairy spell, the soul of all enchantment.
For as I look I see the darkened clouds disperse,
And see again the blue of Heaven's dome;

Again the light, long banners softly streaming
Between the parted cloudrifts, bringing home to earth
The tender, warm and healing light of peace.
And as I look I see a new life quicken,
And up from out the ashes of your heart
Rise once again, to live and grow and flourish.
I see the scars of war smoothed from your breast,
And covered by a cloak of nature's kindness,
New forms, new life, take root within your being;
From out the old and dead the new is born.
The seed gains life and blooms, matures and ripens,
A resurrection of the life that died.
And as I listen, up are wafted to me,
On many-scented zephyrs, soft and sweet,
The sounds of happy life and life contented,
The joyous laugh of careless, happy childhood,
The song of toiling peasant at his work,
The calling voice of mothers at the dusk,
When back to home their scattered broods return.
I hear the creak of carts and wagons laden,
And song of mating birds that sing of love.
Full to my ear is borne the song of life,
Strong, clear and sweet, a mighty vibrant chord,
Struck from your soul by God's reviving hand.

But, when at night, I listen in the darkness,
Your mighty sounds of wakened life are stilled,
And o'er your plains I hear the tramp of armies
That long ago have passed, but now return,
Armies of ghosts, whose tortured souls awaken
From out their last long sleep, beneath your breast;
For they who fell and died in heat of battle,
Those restless souls of heroes, know no rest.
Legion on legion, ever through the night,
They march, and live, and fight again their battles;
While you, whose life depended on their death,
Sleep safe beneath their tramping ghostly feet.

KITCHENER

He sleeps:
The silent soldier whom we loved.
Stilled in the icy depths, his hand.
His shroud, the token of our strength;
The sea, his tomb, his sepulchre;
His requiem, the restless tides
That pound in muffled beat the shore.
God's candles, from the sky, shed down
Their slender, spirit radiance,
To light his bier, where angels weep.

Silent in life (his soldier creed
That deeds should live, his monument),
He silent passed; the reaper's toll
But clay; his spirit deathless lives
In every loyal British heart.
Where is the bitter sting of death,
That frees a soul, pregnant with God?
He is in death but mightier
To show the way where duty leads.

FIELD MARSHAL EARL KITCHENER

But weep:
No mother's eyes with tears are dim;
There is no wife to mourn her dead;
No hand of woman comforted
In tenderness his steadfast heart;
Not one of these to call his own.
But now an empire's mothers mourn,
An empire's heart in grief is bowed,
An empire's tears silently fall,
An empire's soul is filled with love.

But grief shall pass, and tears shall cease,
Where hearts are steeled for empire's cause;
And sacrifices such as this
But make us strong our cross to bear.
The flag that bowed to half-mast breeze,
One saddened week, our king's command,
Again a meteor streams on high.
The chapter ends; the book is closed;
Salute the flag and Kitchener.

THE DAY—"DER TAG"

THE day:
To you a toast, a pledge of hate,
Made in the heat of wine,
Given on drunken lips.
A dream,
For which you gave your life, to grasp
Its empty nothingness,
A void intangible.
Of hate;
You made yourself a deity,
Your God you put to shame;
Honor you knew not of.
For you:
Oblivion, the mark of Cain,
Abhorred of all mankind,
Cast out, in death, alone.

THE DAY—"DER TAG"

The day:
For us, a bright and shining goal,
Beyond the crash of war,
Redemption of our blood.
A dream;
For which we kept our faith in God,
To bring to all mankind
The right of liberty.
Of love;
We knew its strength to save and keep,
Our pledge of brotherhood,
Our God, our deity.
For us:
Reward, the goal you forfeited,
Honored by all the world,
Loved by all mankind.
The day, a dream of hate for you,
For us a dream of love.

THE SWORD

(Written after the order was promulgated abolishing the use of swords in active warfare.)

My day is past, and like all old things,
Worn out in the serving of those they love,
I am hung on the wall, a souvenir,
A curious relic of days that are gone.

Strange eyes may look on my slender form,
And strange hands may touch me carelessly,
Strange tongues tell of the deeds I have done,
But strange hearts quicken never for me.

Still I shall wait, and the day shall be,
When the one I love will come again,
His eyes will be tender and soft his voice,
His hands will caress and his heart beat fast;

For he has gone to the wars away,
And he misses me, needs me, in the fray,
For I was his sweetheart when we were young,
And we fought and loved, our hearts as one.

To tell of the bonds of secret love
That bound us together and kept us fast,
Would be but to tear anew the wounds
That were made when we parted, he and I.

For I could tell of our vigils long,
In the bitter cold of a northern night,
And I could tell of adventures rare
That we shared beneath the southern cross.

And I could tell strange tales of the East,
In the scented halls of Eastern kings,
For in all of these we found life and love,
And all those things that were dear to our hearts.

How happy I was to leap from my bed,
And meet his lips, as the general passed;
How happy I was, as I nestled back,
And his loving hand lulled me to rest.

How proud I was, in the battle's wild roar,
To lead and sweep clear for my king the way;
For we were comrades, both tried and true,
On many a hard fought field and day.

But the chivalrous days of the past have gone,
When the man of strong and sturdy heart
Upheld the honor of king and laws;
He is now but an atom of passing thought.

THE SWORD

No more will the man with nerves of steel,
With the lion heart and the eagle eye,
Spring forth when the battle's raging hot,
And with lightning sword blade raised on high
Call on to the charge with a leader's cry.

No, he must wait and fret and die,
In a stinking trench, in the filth and mud,
Struck down by the gas of a cowardly foe,
Who sneak and crawl, like thieves in the night,
Lest they meet face to face in open fight.

Just this I ask, ere I am forgot,
And laid away, like the glory of old,
Should my hero fall on the field of death,
Should he die out there, in the night and cold,
Should he be laid in a common grave
And buried with those who fell by his side,
Just take me and lay me upon his breast;
No other wreath will he need beside.
Then we shall together be for aye,
And we'll sleep the long, long sleep of death
In the sacred soil of that foreign land,
Made sacred by heroes such as he,
Who gave their lives in the noblest cause
For which our blood has e'er been shed.
Ah, 'tis sweet to live, but sublime to die,
For helpless, weak humanity.

MEDICALLY UNFIT

Do not look with scornful eye
On the one who is turned away;
The heart that beats in that sickly frame
May beat with a patriot's love and fire;
Though his physical fires burn dim and low
His fires of spirit may soar.
His sacrifice, then, is greater than yours;
He stays and endures, while you go.

COURAGE (AT HOME)

(To a husband who fell at St. Julien.)

We parted, dear, at the close of day,
When the swallows were going to rest.
I little thought 'twas our last good-bye,
So lightly and gladly you went away,
I hardly knew you were gone, but now
I miss you; I miss you the whole day through,
And the nights seem ages long;
And sometimes I wish I would not wake
Till I wake in your arms in the great beyond.

They say that the sun still brightly shines,
And others, dear, are happy and gay;
But to me each day seems like the last —
So dreary and lonely and long and grey.
I listen at night for your footfall,
As you came at dusk from your work to me,
And I lean to meet your kiss;
But my arms meet nothing but shadows
That enfold me so close in their chill embrace.

COURAGE (AT HOME)

Oh, could I but kiss your lips to-night
As you lie so calm and cold and still;
And could I but clasp your hand in mine
And lay my head on your breast, as of old;
Could those lips but speak to me again
In the old tender way they used to speak,
Of our home, and faith, and love.
But oh! I know this can never be,
Unless you come back in my dreams, dear, to me.

Still I'll go on to the very end,
No matter how far it seems away;
I'll do the tasks that are set to do,
As though you were here to share them with me;
My solace shall be, my soul's support—
I'm proud to know what my solace shall be,
Though my heart is dead and cold;
'Twill leap again, for my soldier dead,
And my solace will be that I am your wife.

SONATE

One Day.

The day is past, and I have turned
Another leaf of life, toward the end.
I studied well the page, for
I have learned that each page
Holds that which it is well to learn.
It is not but a day that's gone
Forever, a span from sun to sun,
A period of light, and one of dark,
A space of toil, a space of rest,
An ever endless change of gold and grey;
But it is that most precious thing,
The glass that holds the sands of life,
The gauge by which all things are made,
The measure of all finite things; time.

GERMANY

(Written after reading the " Crimes of the German Army.")

GERMANY, be not ours the tongue to curse you,
Be not ours the heart to hate you,
But be ours the pow'r to hurl you
Cringing, coward, in your shame.

Yours the curse of silenced tongues,
Stilled in death, your strength to prove;
Yours the hate of hearts, that live
But to hate, the beast that slew
Man and woman, child and babe,
Innocent in thought of wrong.

Would but to God we could forever stamp
Your curséd feline blood from out the earth;
Kin of the tiger and the treacherous cat,
That stalk, on padded feet, the aisles of night,
To strike in stealth the harmless, sleeping lamb,
And tear the unborn young from mother's womb;

To rend apart the sire and the dam,
And leave them crushed and mangled in their
blood.
Theirs but the lust to kill, for killing's sake;
Theirs but to maim and cripple and destroy.
Yours but to gloat o'er helpless thousands slain,
And glut your savage lust in heartless crime.

What is the glory of a victory
Smeared on your banners in the blood of babes?
What is the fame of mocking eulogy,
Raised to your arms upon their pit'ous graves?
Theirs is the glory; theirs the victory.
Sacred, immortal, is the ground that holds
And cradles them in living, deathless fame.
Yours is the shame, the burning mark of Cain,
Seared in your soul, and branded murderer,
Red with the wrath of kindled spirit's flame;
White with the heat of godly righteousness.

You in your ego, pomp and foolish pride,
Searched through dark ways for a place in the
sun,
Blind to the truth that was welcoming you,
Through ways lit by peace, to the envied spot.

We held to you, in the hand of a friend,
The key to the secret of world domain;
And then you took the key in friendship's name.
Your commerce spread unto the ends of earth.
Without a conquest, by your arméd might,
You took the path into the noonday sun,
And there it lay before you, true and bright,
An easy way to victory o'er the world;
For when you took our trade you took our life,
And we, supine, lay resting from our tasks,
Thoughtless, but pleased that clever, cunning hands
Had tak'n from ours the stains of honest toil,
And left them white and soft in indolence.

We blessed you for your wealth of sciences,
And all the world beside your praises sang;
We gave to you our place and called you friend,
And trusted you to stand a friend with us.
We did not envy you your new world pow'r,
So long as it was influenced by good;
In you we saw the instrument, God-giv'n,
To raise the world from darkness, sin and woe.
But you, when to your lips we held the cup,
Hurled it away, and cursed the giving hand.

Just as the prize was yours, with insane rage
The underlying nature of you rose
Unsatisfied to wait the peaceful way
To victory, and to a world empire;
Rose, when you thought in sleep we helpless lay,
Unwittingly, and unprepared for war;
And thought by one fierce, sudden, mighty blow
To crush us, as we lay relaxed in sleep.
Nought but a conquest, bought by human blood,
Could still the savage fury in your breast;
Nought but the cries of slaughtered innocents
Could purge your heart of vilest, blackest crime;
Blood must be spilled to stain ignoble sword.
Even your feet must wallow in the tide
To flow from broken hearts and make the mud
That is but filthed, and tainted by the touch,
When in its mould your swinish body lies.

Then with this vile resolve fast in your heart,
You struck, as lightning from a cloudless sky,
And called it war. We had been taught to know
That war was terrible and useless waste;
That sacrifices, trials, must be met.
We knew that war demanded of our best,
The flow'r of manhood, intellect and wealth.

We had been taught that only force of arms,
'Twixt countries that believed in our God,
Was used when every peaceful way had failed,
And right and reason had fallen from their throne;
And that when arméd lands stood face to face,
To settle their disputes, by fire and sword,
Each would extend to foes who fell before
The hand of pity and of sympathy,
To ease and soothe and heal their burning wounds;
And that when peace descended once again,
They would to their beloved ones return,
And find them safe and free from every harm.
That is the war that we were taught to know:
The war of honor in a righteous cause;
The war to help the weak against the strong.
Even the savage races of the earth,
We learned, were chivalrous to fearless foe.

Now, you, oh Germany, who called to God
To stand with you, to sacrifice the world,
Have lost, for aye, the saving right of grace.
You've branded deep hell's brand within your soul;
You've shamed the prince of devils and his imps;
You've lost the right of human sympathy.

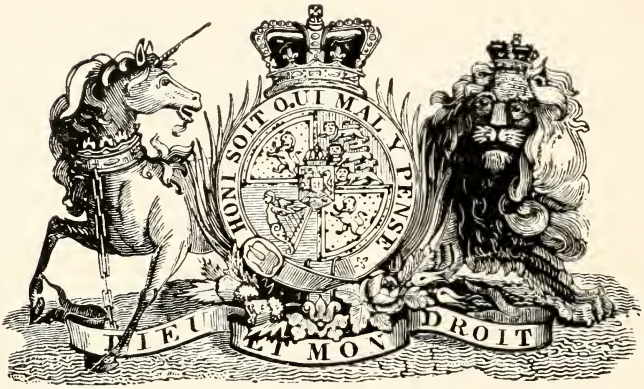
You've earned the curse of every Christian race,
And e'en the lands that bow to heathen gods
Spurn you in scorn.

And now, because against you every hand
And every noble mind and heart is turned,
You shall go back to that oblivion
From whence your race was sprung, to curse the world.
Back with the Hun, and Goth, and fierce Magyar,
Whose history's page is reeked with human blood.
Down through the ages, yours the cruelty,
The shameless crime, the wanton lust to kill,
That has destroyed, with ruthless fire and sword,
Each effort that was made to lift mankind.
Where'er God's spirit rested on the world
And filled the race with kindness, peace and love,
There was your heartless fury fiercest spent
Against the unprepared, the weak and old.
But this the last, this charnel house of crime,
The culmination of iniquity;
The last of vilest crimes and frightfulness;
The last great burden of the human race.
For we will drive you at the cannon's mouth,
And all your race, your children and your kin;
And we will scatter you throughout the earth,
And tear from you the poison fangs of pow'r.

All that you've given to the world we'll lose,
Your art, your music and your sciences;
But we will even then the gainer be,
For what you gave, you tenfold took away.
You gave us science, dreams past mortal mind,
And with it took our best. Our men lie slain.
You gave to us art glories of the world,
But you, in turn, our womanhood defiled.
You gave us music, grand, inspired, sublime.
You murdered babes. Our children, tortured, die.
Yes, you have taken from us all we love,
Our hearts are broken and our souls are numbed;
But still there lives that deathless, vital thing,
God gave to us, in Pentecostal fire,
Honor and right, the living flame of light.

And now the mighty pow'rs of heav'n and hell
Shall struggle in the throes of life and death.
This is the final test to prove the truth.
You have allied yourself with Beelzebub;
We pray to God that truth and right shall live;
And with that faith, that we own as our creed,
Our life, we'll stand where we have ta'en our stand,
Until the tiger blood that in you flows
Is spilled to the last poison, murderous drop.

But if we fail, then we ourselves shall die,
And all our race shall lie with us in death;
And we will leave to you and yours the earth,
And peace, the maimed and crippled heir of war.
For this the firm resolve that we have made:
No more upon the earth shall there reside
The pow'rs of night beside the pow'rs of day.
Which is the stronger; this the time to prove.
Which is the true one, hell's hate or God's love.
We have our faces set toward the goal,
The humble Cross of Christ on Calvary's hill.
We believe in God, Christ and Trinity,
And there our faith is fixed, unquenchable.
Germany,
Be not ours the tongue to curse you,
Be not ours the heart to hate you,
God give us the pow'r to hurl you
Back to the darkness whence you sprung.


HONI SOIT QUI MAL Y PENSE
DIEU ET MON DROIT

THE EMPIRE

Fabric of dreams, but made of sterner stuff,
The bone and brawn and blood of fearless men.
Born of the wanderlust, that was conceived
When knights in armor sought the Holy Grail.
Built on the truth, of human faith, and love;
Bowed at the shrine of Freedom and of God.
Fixed as Time and the universal law;
Changeless as Death and as subtle as Life;
Mystic as spirit and filmy as dreams;
Vision of sages and prophet of tears.
Formed and as formless as vapors at morn;
Deep and as depthless as dew-scented air;
Strong and as weak as the spirit of love;
Fierce and as tender as eagle and dove.
In abstract and concrete intangible;
Light as the clouds in ethereal robes;
Made not of cities, nor mountains, nor plains,
But drawn to a grand and wonderful plan,
Plan of the Infinite; love for our God.